

An Overview of Social Carrying Capacity for Wolves in Michigan

R. Ben Peyton

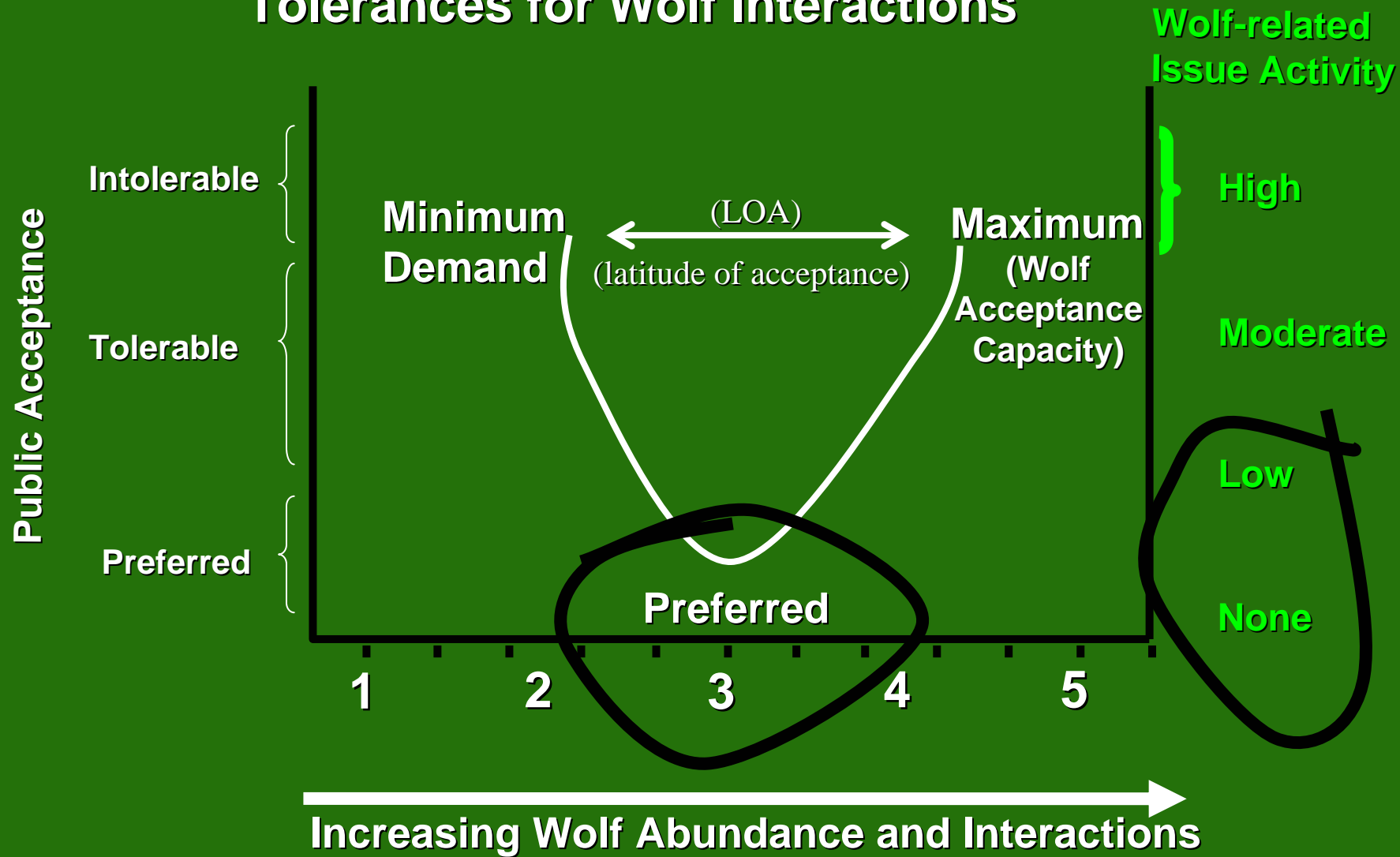
**Department of Fisheries and Wildlife
Michigan State University**



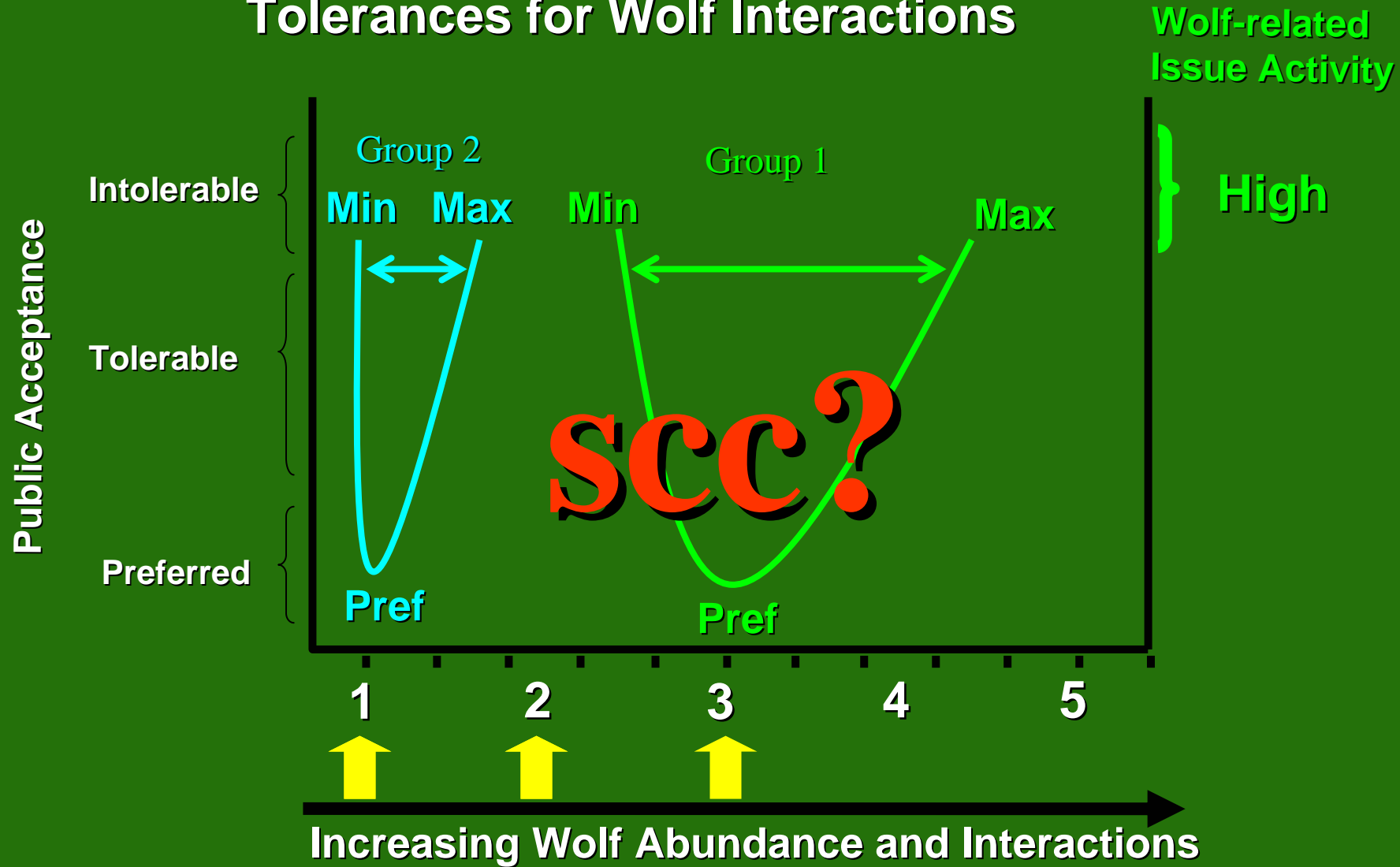
Key Issues:

- **How many wolves and where? (SCC)**
- **What are acceptable means of managing wolf populations and wolf problems?**

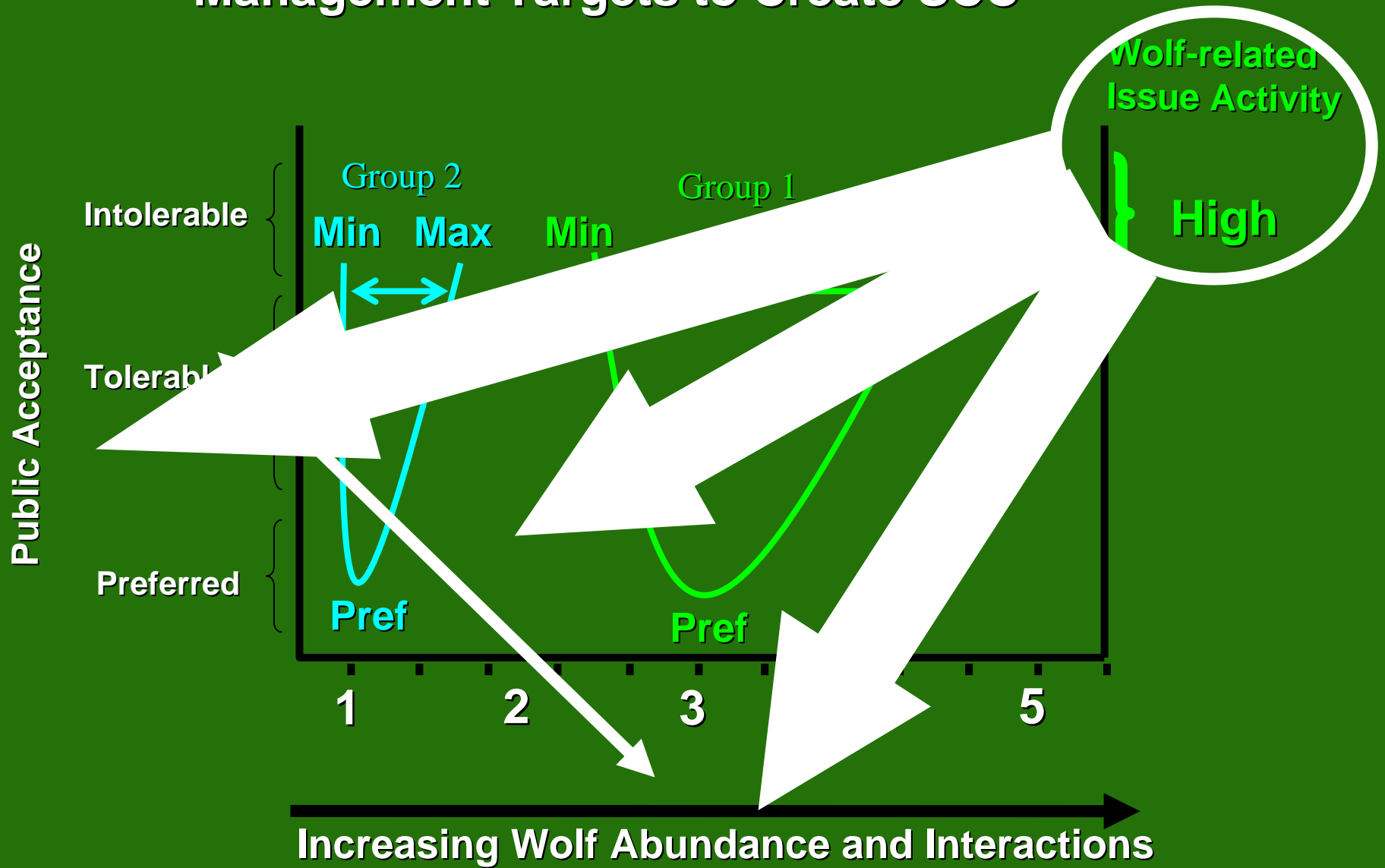
A Single Stakeholder Group's Preferences and Tolerances for Wolf Interactions



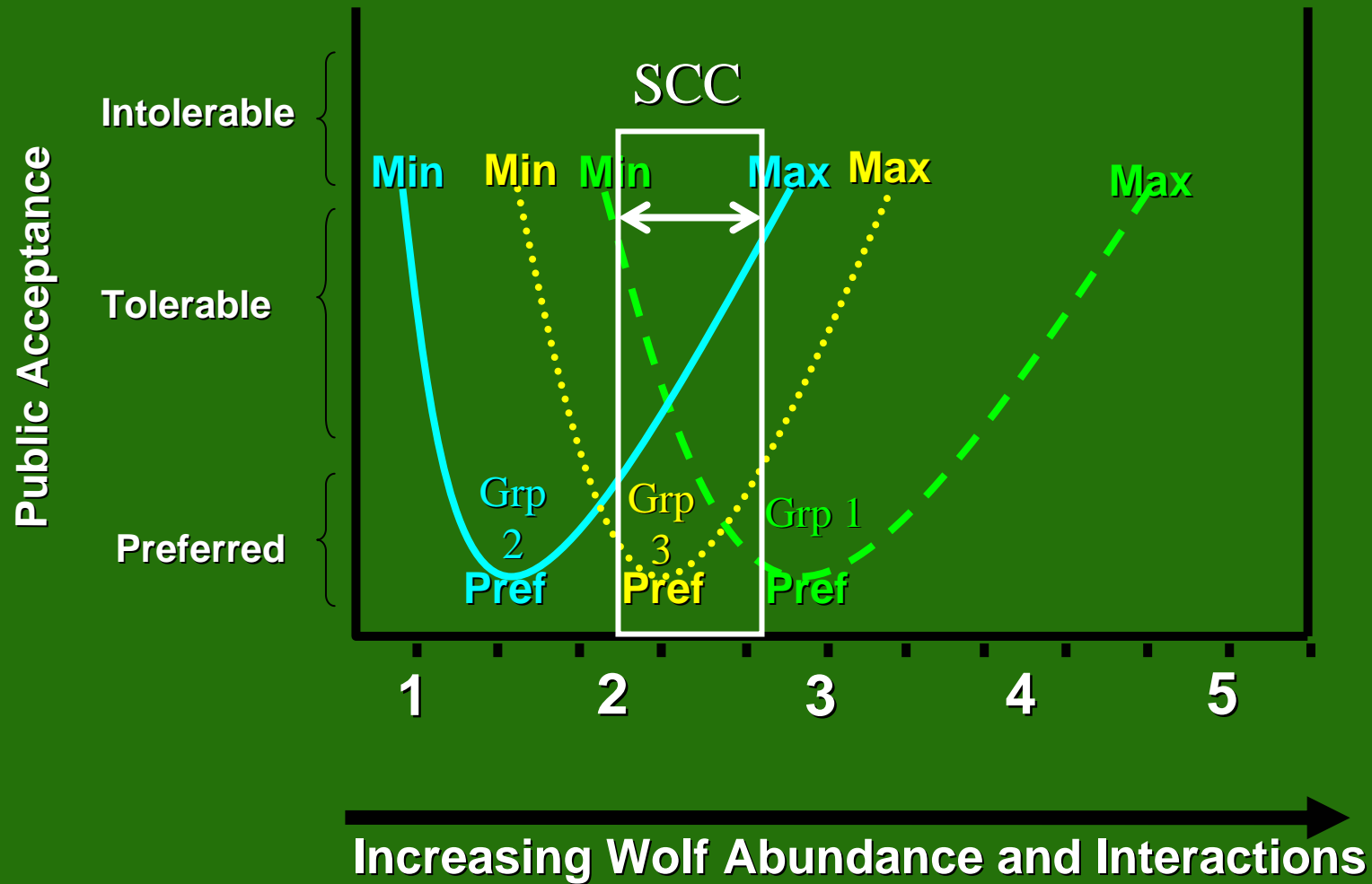
Two Stakeholder Groups' Preferences and Tolerances for Wolf Interactions



Management Targets to Create SCC



A Defined Social Carrying Capacity Among Three Stakeholder Groups



Methods

- MiDNR public meetings (Spring 2005)
- Focus group meetings (Summer 2005)
- Questionnaire review panel
- Mail surveys (Fall/winter 2005-06)
 - Pre-notice letter,
 - First survey mailing,
 - Reminder postcard ,
 - Second survey mailing,
 - Third survey mailing

General Public Survey
Livestock Growers Survey
(Furtaker Survey)

Increasing
wolf numbers



SITUATION 1:

- * No Wolves

SITUATION 2:

- * Wolves in a few counties at very low numbers
- * Rare sightings
- * No loss of livestock to wolves in most years
- * Rare loss of pets or hunting dogs to wolves
- * The Michigan DNR finds no impact on hunter deer harvest due to wolves

Wolf Situation Table

SITUATION 3:

- * Wolves in many counties but at low numbers
- * Occasionally seen near rural homes or roads in some areas
- * Less than 1% of farms per year lose livestock
- * Some loss of pets and hunting dogs likely – less than 10 per year
- * The Michigan DNR finds no impact on hunter deer harvest due to wolves

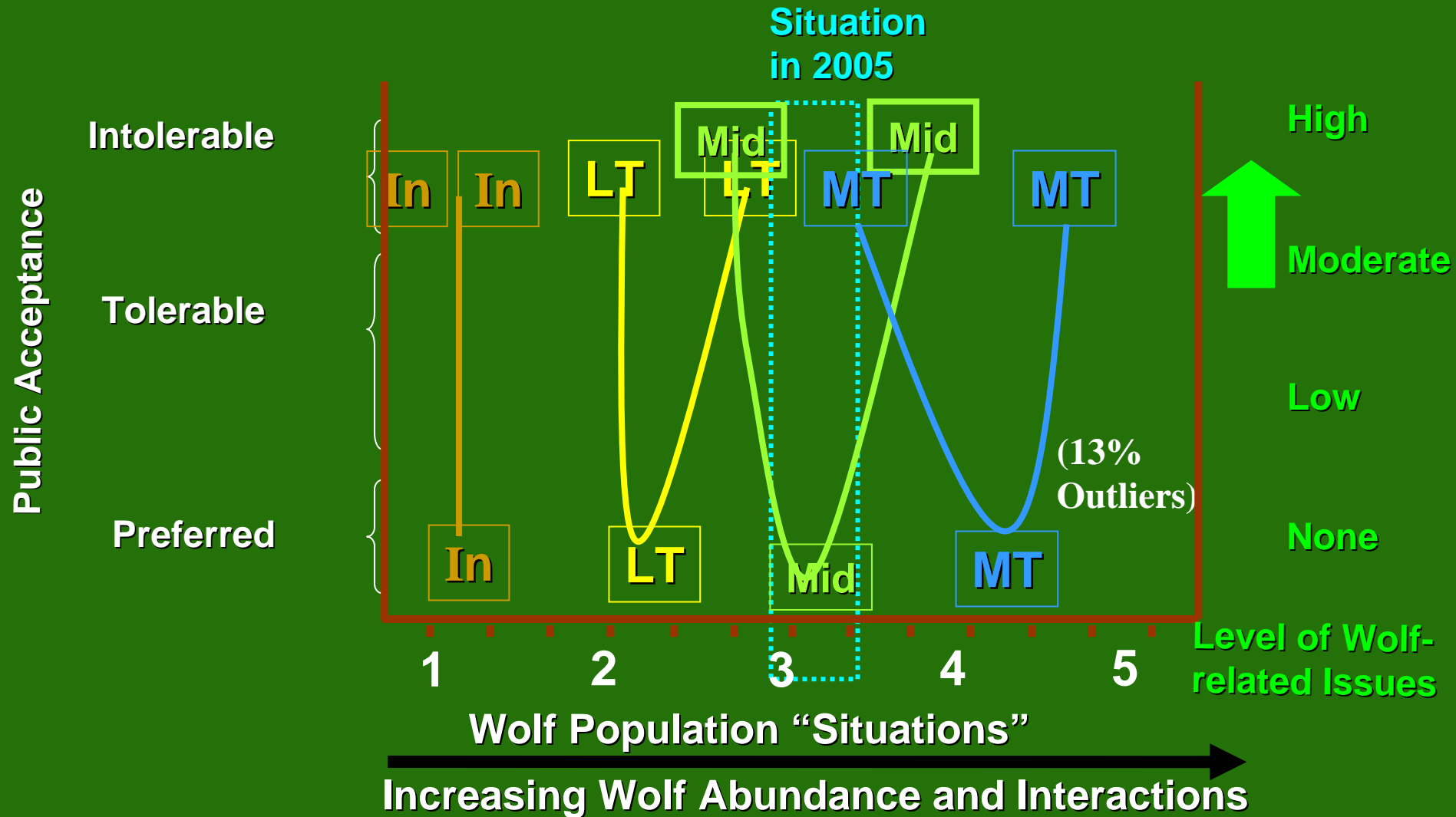
SITUATION 4:

- * Wolves exist in most counties at moderate numbers
- * Often seen near rural homes or roads in many areas
- * About 1% of farms per year lose livestock (about 7 farms in the UP and 40 in the NLP)
- * Pets and/or hunting dogs known to be lost yearly to wolves averages 15 to 20
- * The Michigan DNR finds a small decrease in hunter deer harvest is due to wolves

SITUATION 5:

- * Wolves exist in all counties in the highest numbers that can be sustained by the habitat
- * Frequent, widespread sightings near rural homes and roads, occasional sightings near towns
- * About 2% of farms per year lose livestock (about 14 farms in the UP, 80 in the NLP)
- * Pets and/or hunting dogs known to be lost yearly to wolves averages 20 - 25
- * The Michigan DNR finds a moderate decrease in hunter deer harvest due to wolves

Segments of Interested MI Citizens (Weighted Data): Tolerance for Wolves in the UP



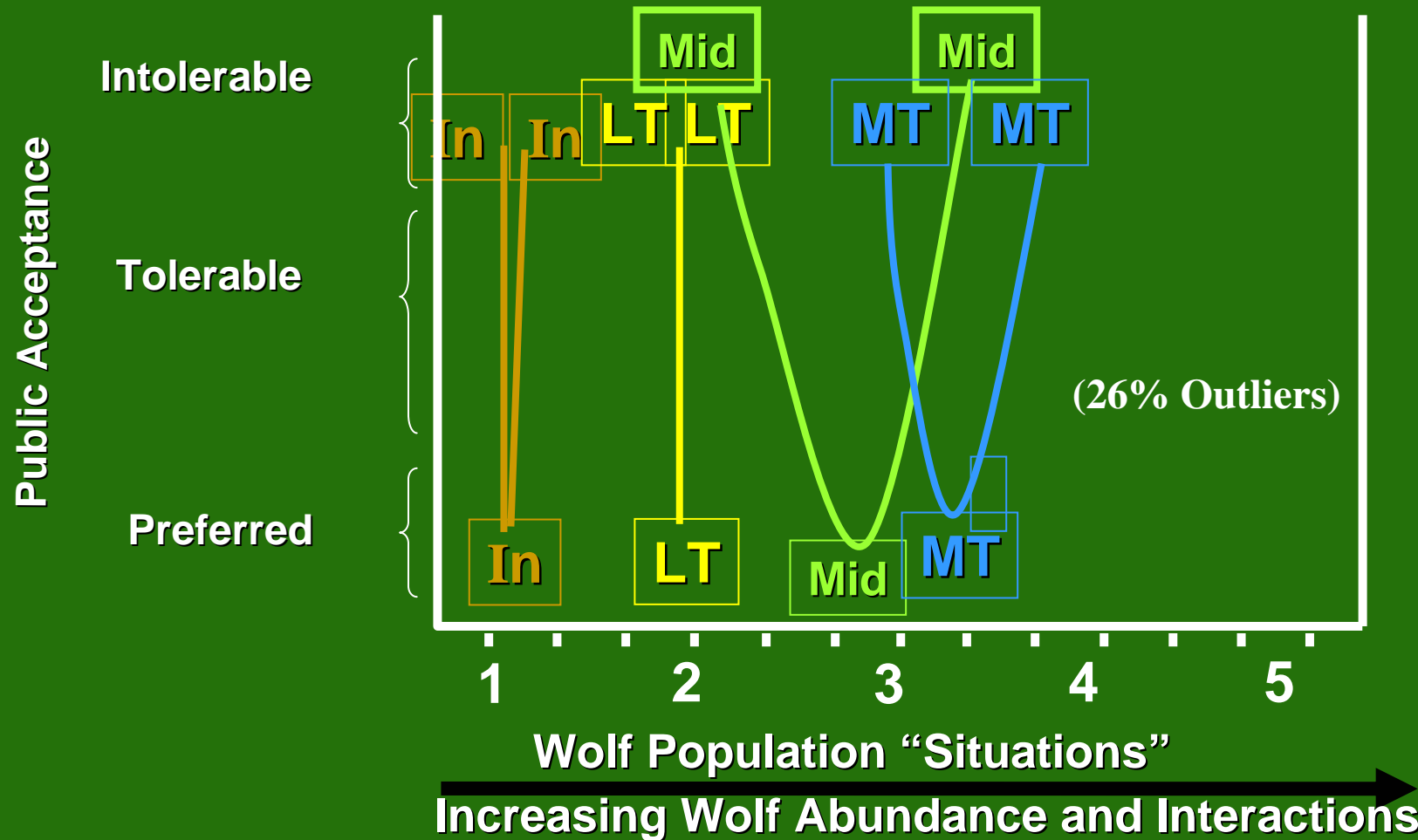
In = Intolerant
7%

LT = Least Tolerant
21%

Mid = Mid-Tolerant
28%

MT = Most Tolerant
32%

Segments of Interested MI Citizens (Weighted Data): Tolerance for Wolves in the NLP



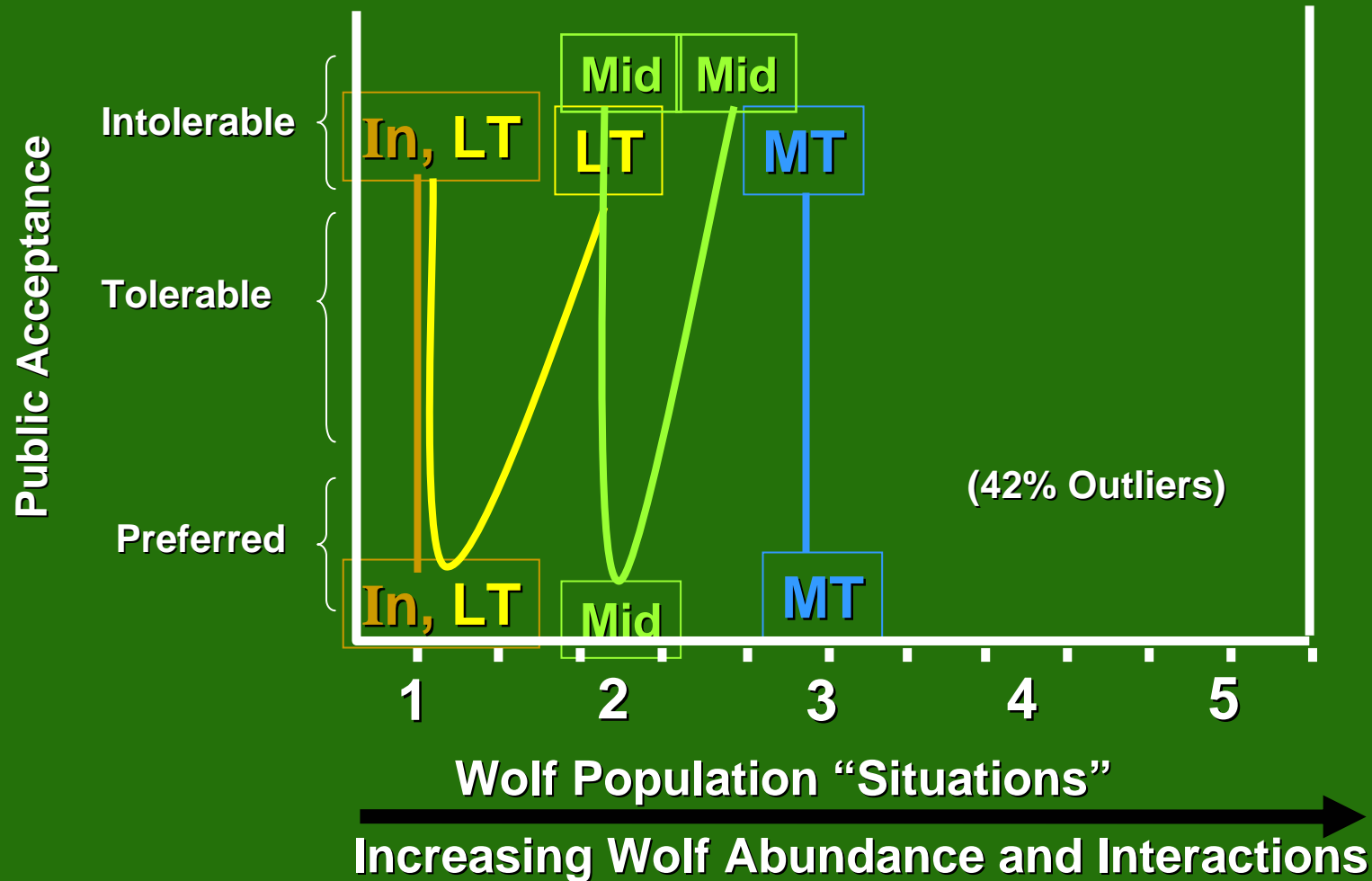
In = Intolerant
13%

LT = Least Tolerant
10%

Mid = Mid-Tolerant
30

MT = Most Tolerant
20%

Segments of Interested MI Citizens (Weighted Data): Tolerance for Wolves in the SLP



In = Intolerant
22%

LT = Least Tolerant
6%

Mid = Mid-Tolerant
22%

MT = Most Tolerant
8%

SCC Summary:

- **More overlap in tolerances needed in all regions**
- **Diminishing tolerance: UP wolves → NLP wolves → SLP wolves**
- **Tolerance for UP Wolves Lowest in North, Highest in South**
- **Only 7% “intolerant” of UP Wolves...**
 - **Greatest Intolerance in: UP residents, Livestock Growers, Hunters**
- **Region of Residence is as Important as Interest Group**
- **Premature to assess SCC or BCC in the SLP**

Tolerance for UP Wolves Among Non-hunting, Non-farming, Outdoor Respondents (weighted for region of residence)

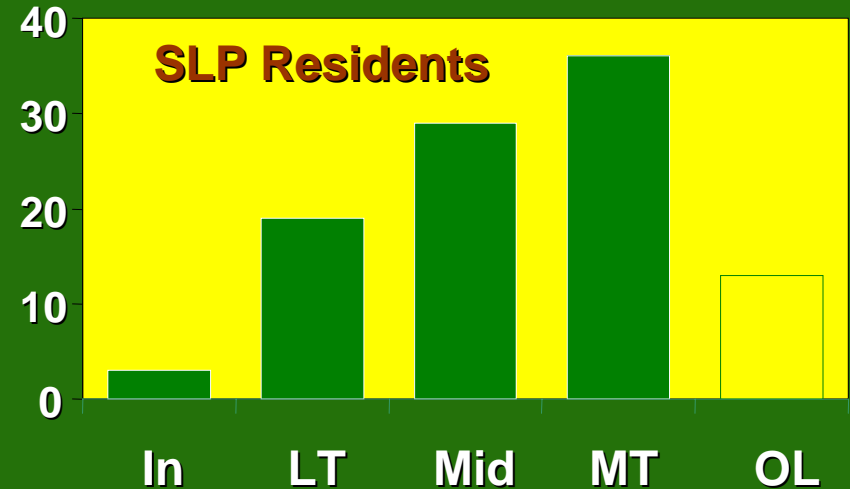
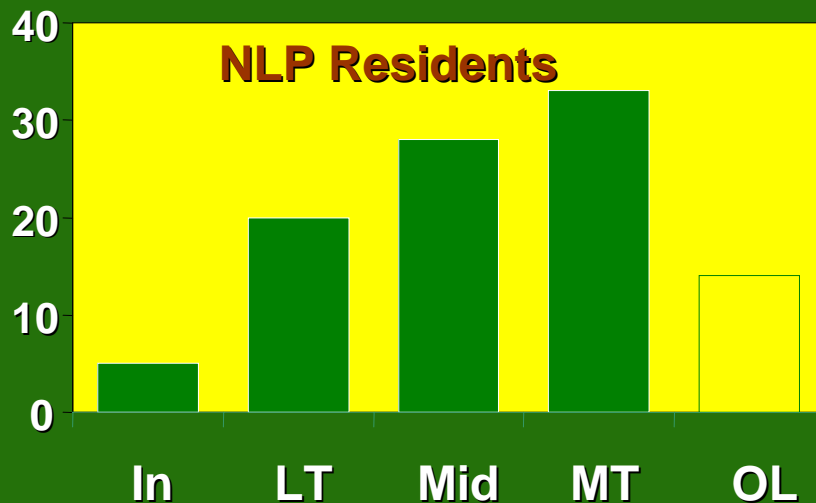
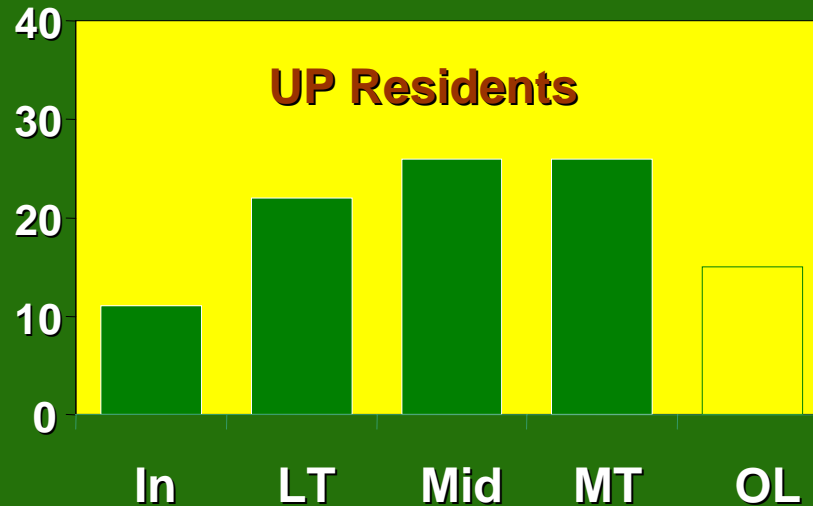
In= Intolerant

LT = Least Tolerant

Mid = Mid-Tolerant

MT = Most Tolerant

OL= Outliers



Tolerance for UP Wolves Among Hunters by Region of Residence

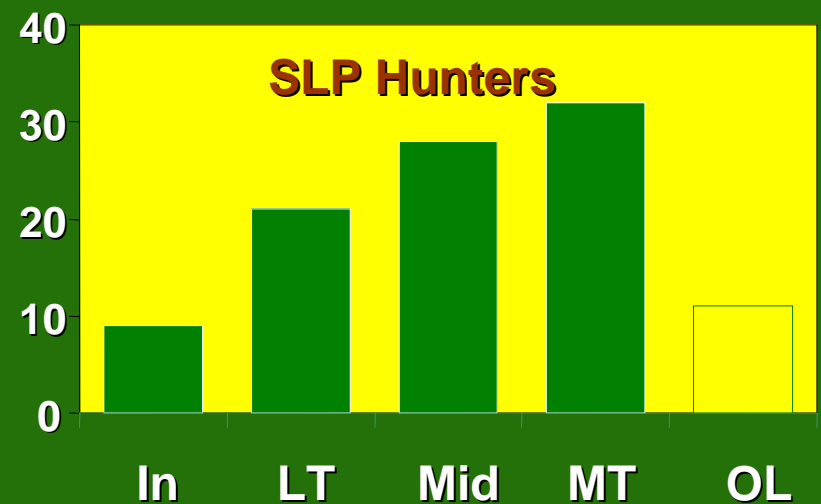
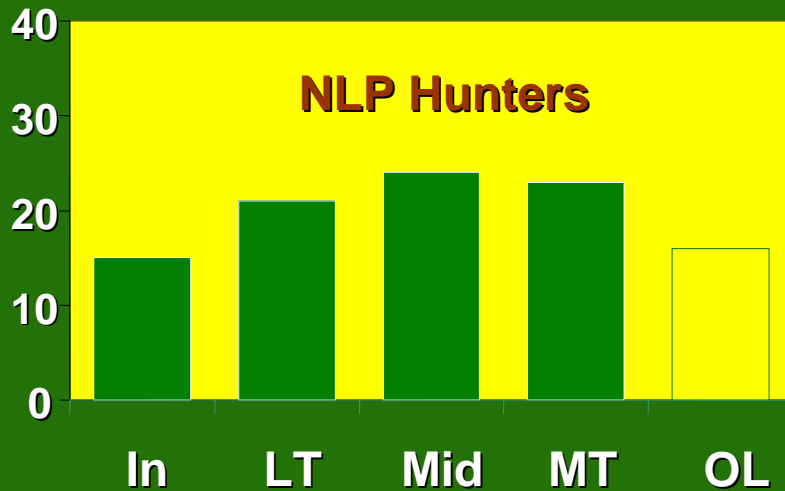
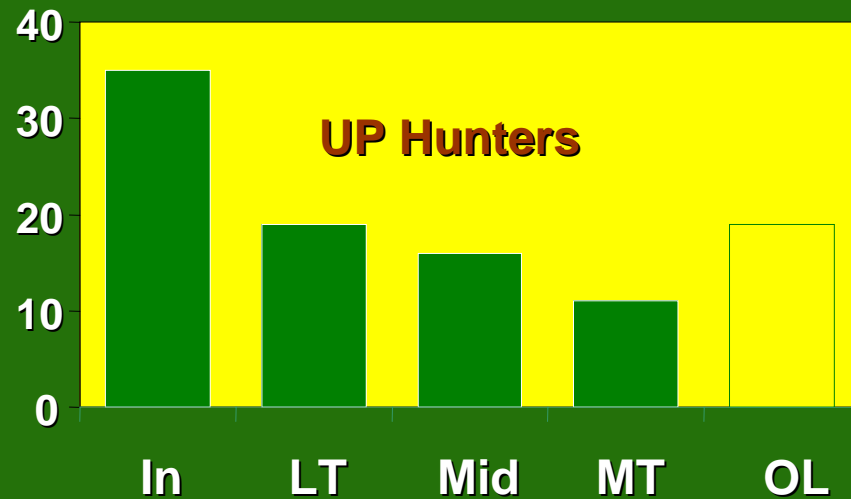
In= Intolerant

LT = Least Tolerant

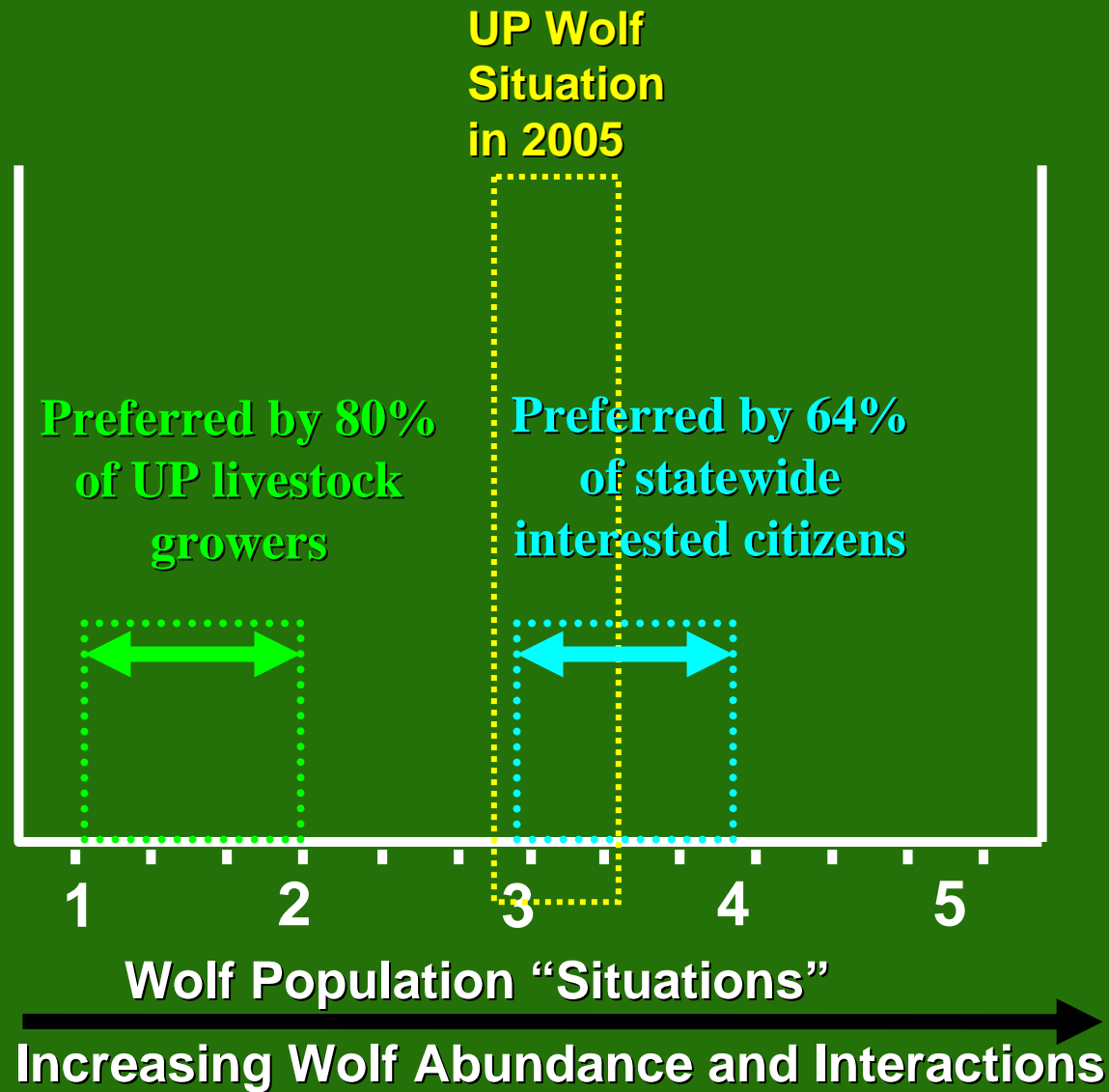
Mid = Mid-Tolerant

MT = Most Tolerant

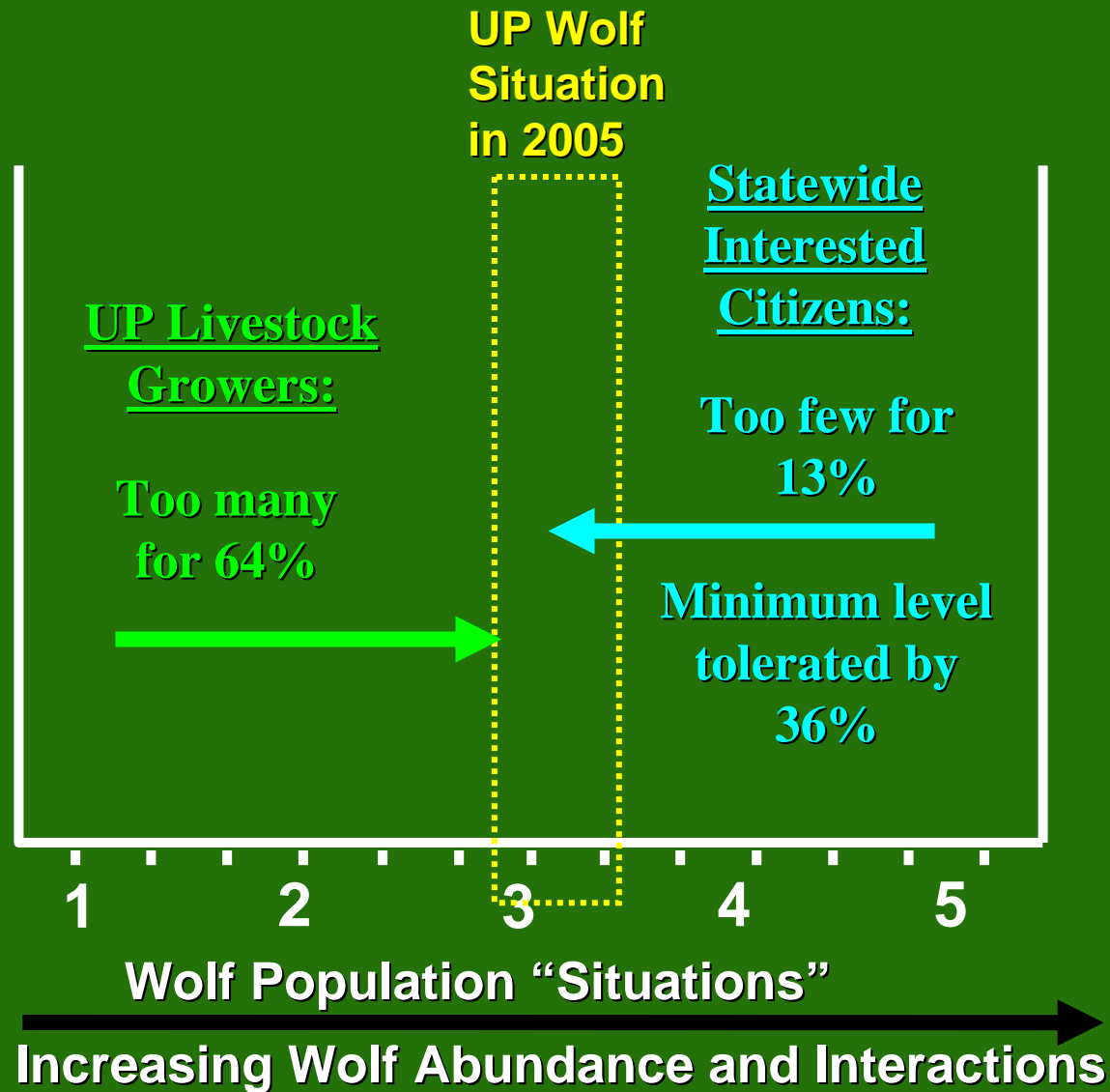
OL = Outliers



SCC for UP Wolves: Preferred Levels



SCC for UP Wolves: Conflicting Tolerances



The Interested Public Supports Management of Wolves

- “leave wolves alone” was rejected as an option by 67%
- 76% approved of farmer authority to remove problem wolves
- Selectively killing problem wolves was supported by 75%
- reducing regional wolf population to control depredation losses was supported by 54%